

Since 1961, the third week in March has been designated as *National Poison Prevention Week*. The week is an opportunity to highlight the dangers of poisonings throughout the lifespan and to promote community involvement in poisoning prevention on a local and national level. Each year, more than 2 million poisoning exposures are reported to the 61 Poison Centers across the country.

This year's *National Poison Prevention Week* is March 15 – 21, 2009. We encourage you to partner with your local Poison Center and support the activities that the Poison Center is planning around *National Poison Prevention Week* or ask for guidance on conducting your own activities. Poisoning is a leading public health problem, second only to motor vehicle crashes as a leading cause of unintentional injury death. Collaborating with your local Poison Center to unite your community in commemoration of *National Poison Prevention Week* will help to protect the safety of individuals, their families, and your entire community. Throughout the country, Poison Centers will conduct activities to raise awareness of the dangers of poisoning. Please see the enclosed list of regional Poison Centers, or visit www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov to learn about the activities being conducted by the Poison Center serving your area.

The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) funds the national Poison Help hotline (1-800-222-1222) to reach the Nation's 61 Poison Centers, provides funding support to the Poison Centers, promotes the Poison Help hotline, and promotes *National Poison Prevention Week*. HRSA is the primary Federal agency for improving access to

health care services for people who are uninsured, isolated, or medically vulnerable. HRSA provides national leadership, program resources, and services needed to improve access to culturally competent, quality health care.

www.PoisonHelp.hrsa.gov

The Poison Help Web site provides resources for the public, health care professionals, and organizations to help sponsor poison prevention activities in your community. The Web site also offers:

- A Poison Center locator, to help individuals locate the address and Web site of the Poison Center serving their area.
- Tips for promoting Poison Help, including Poison Help communication tools, downloadable digital ads, an education calendar, and Poison Help brochures.
- Valuable information about poison prevention including a list of frequently asked questions and facts about poisonings and poison safety.
- Information on how to access additional poison prevention resources.

Know the Poisoning Facts

- Each year, more than 2 million poisonings exposures are reported to the Nation's Poison Centers.
- On average, Poison Centers handle one possible poisoning every 13 seconds.
- More than 70 percent of all poison deaths occur in adults ages 20 to 59.
- Older adults are more likely than others to die from poisonings. These adults account for 5 percent of possible poisonings but for 16 percent of possible deaths.



- Over 50 percent of poisoning exposures involve children under age 6.
- Approximately 90 percent of poisonings occur in people's homes.
- Almost 90 percent of the general public who call a local Poison Center get the help they need over the telephone without having to go to a doctor or to the hospital.
- Calling the Poison Help hotline (1-800-222-1222) connects you to the Poison Center serving your area, is available 24/7, and is staffed by nurses, pharmacists, doctors, and other poison experts.

The American Association of Poison Control Centers (AAPCC) maintains the only poison information and surveillance database in the United States. Calls from all 61 Poison Centers across the country are

uploaded approximately every 10 minutes to this National Poison Data System. It offers real-time monitoring and identifying of poisoning patterns, chemical exposures, and other potential public health hazards. The AAPCC publishes an annual report of all poison exposure and information calls made to the 61 Poison Centers across the country. This report can be accessed through www.aapcc.org.

National Poison Prevention Week is commissioned by the *National Poison Prevention Week Council*, an organization made up of public and private partners who are committed to reducing unintentional poisonings, promoting poison prevention, and coordinating annual events to promote *National Poison Prevention Week*. For more information on the *National Poison Prevention Week Council* and member organizations, visit www.poisonprevention.org.

